

1 Constitution of the West Liberty United Church of Christ
2 2015
3 Adopted during Special Congregational Meeting, February 21, 2016
4

5 Preamble
6

7 The church has origins dating to 1814 and was incorporated in 1962 as the United
8 Church of Christ, Congregational Christian. The church has subsequently been known as the
9 West Liberty United Church of Christ and is located at 212 West Newell Street, West Liberty,
10 Logan County, Ohio 43357.
11

12 Mission Statement

13 The mission of the West Liberty United Church of Christ is to respond to the Word of
14 God revealed in scripture and through God's Holy Spirit, so that we may embody Christ's new
15 life of peace and justice by providing a faith community for people to worship God, to serve God
16 and people, and to grow in faith and wisdom.

17 Statement of Faith

18 The congregation of the West Liberty United Church of Christ affirms the United Church
19 of Christ Statement of Faith (1977, 1981, adapted):

20 We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and
21 to God's deeds we testify:

22 God calls the worlds into being, creates persons in the divine image, and sets before
23 each one the ways of life and death.

24 God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

25 God judges all people and nations by God's righteous will declared through prophets and
26 apostles.

27 In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, God has come to us
28 and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to the Creator.

29 God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,
30 binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

31 God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be servants in
32 the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to
33 share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

34 God promises to all who trust in the gospel forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,
35 courage in the struggle for justice and peace, the Holy Spirit's presence in trial and rejoicing,
36 and eternal life in God's realm which has no end.

37 Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God.
38

39 ARTICLE I
40 Membership

41
42 Section 1- Qualification

43
44 The church will welcome into membership any person who requests membership,
45 professes Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, subscribes to the doctrines and faith of the church,
46 pledges allegiance to Jesus Christ and has been baptized. A prospective member must satisfy
47 one of the following requirements:

48
49 (a) Has been confirmed or made public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and
50 Savior.

51
52 (b) Has presented a satisfactory letter of transfer from another church.

53
54 (c) Has made a reaffirmation of faith if a letter of transfer is not available.
55

56 Section 2- Responsibilities of Members

57
58 Members shall be expected to support the church by attending worship services
59 regularly, by taking part in the celebration of the Lord's Supper (communion), and by sharing in
60 the life and work of the church. Members shall provide the church clerk with a current address
61 and current contact information, including an electronic mail address, if available.
62

63 Section 3 – Inactive Status & Termination

64
65 (a) Any member who does not fulfill his or her obligations pursuant to Section 2 may be
66 placed on inactive status or dropped from membership by a vote of the Board. Efforts to
67 communicate with the member at the last known address and via the most recently updated
68 contact information shall constitute notice to the member of the initiation of proceedings to
69 change a member's status from active to inactive or to terminate membership;
70

71 (b) The provisions of Section 3, Paragraph (a) shall not apply to members serving in the
72 armed forces, college students, persons confined to their homes and individuals who have
73 transferred their residence temporarily to another community. However, it is the affirmative
74 responsibility of each member to provide the church clerk with a current mailing address and
75 updated contact information, including an electronic mail address, if available.
76

77 (c) An inactive member may be restored to active membership upon public reaffirmation
78 of faith and recommitment to the life and mission of the congregation.
79

80 ARTICLE II
81 Government and the Governing Body

82
83 Section 1 - The Church Government

84
85 The West Liberty United Church of Christ is a member congregation in the United
86 Church of Christ. The government of the West Liberty UCC is vested solely in the active
87 members of the congregation of the West Liberty UCC who exercise the right of control of all
88 local church affairs through voting at quarterly congregational meetings and/or special meetings.
89

90 Section 2 - The Governing Body

91
92 The governing body of the West Liberty United Church of Christ shall be the active
93 members of the congregation assembled in quarterly congregational meetings and/or in special
94 meetings called by the Board.

95
96 Section 3 – Meetings of the Governing Body

97
98 The church shall hold quarterly congregational meetings. The congregational meeting
99 for the first quarter of each year shall be held in the month of January with subsequent meetings
100 during the months of April, July, and October. The October meeting shall be the designated
101 meeting for the election of all officers and team members not otherwise appointed by the Board
102 or elected within a specific team. The date and time for each quarterly congregational meeting
103 shall be published in the church newsletter and by electronic media and shall be announced in
104 the church bulletin and from the pulpit not less than one month prior to each quarterly meeting.
105

106 In addition to the quarterly congregational meetings, the Board may from time to time
107 call special meetings of the congregation in order to discuss and vote upon special or urgent
108 issues. The date and time for any special meeting of the congregation shall be published via
109 electronic media and shall be announced both in the church bulletin and from the pulpit not less
110 than one week prior to the special meeting. If the special meeting is called by the Board for an
111 immediate vote upon an issue, the specific proposal(s) shall be included in the notice of the
112 special meeting and shall be announced in the church bulletin and from the pulpit.
113

114 Section 4 – Quorum

115
116 Attendance of not less than twenty active members of the congregation at a quarterly
117 congregational meeting or at any special meeting shall constitute a quorum for transacting
118 business.
119

120 Section 5 – Majority Vote Required for Approval

121
122 A majority vote of the active members present at any quarterly congregational meeting
123 (with a quorum present) or any special meeting (with a quorum present) shall determine the
124 action of the church. Inactive members are ineligible to vote at quarterly congregational
125 meetings or special meetings.
126
127

128 ARTICLE III
129 The Pastor

130
131 Section 1 – Mission of the Pastor of the Church

132
133 The Pastor shall assume a central place of leadership in the congregation and perform
134 those services associated with his/her calling essential for the continued development and
135 improvement of the church's ministries. The Pastor shall serve on the Church Board and serve
136 as an ex-officio member on all Teams.
137

138 Section 2 – Eligibility

139

Any Pastor called by the Church as a full-time Pastor shall be a minister in good standing with and authorized by the United Church of Christ.

Section 3 – Calling a Pastor

In order to fill a pastoral vacancy, the Board shall call a special meeting for the express purpose of voting upon whether or not to call a specific candidate to become the new pastor of the church. The candidate shall be invited to give a trial sermon to the congregation for evaluation immediately prior to the special meeting. An announcement of the trial sermon and the special meeting shall be made not less than two weeks prior to the date of the trial sermon and special meeting.

If a quorum is present, the special meeting shall commence immediately after the worship service and the trial sermon. Only those active members of the congregation that attended the trial sermon will be given a ballot for voting and all voting shall be done by secret ballot. A three-fourths favorable vote shall constitute a call.

The candidate shall be notified immediately of the results after the voting has taken place. When a call is given it shall be in writing and contain a complete statement of the contractual arrangement made between the church and the Pastor.

Section 4 – Tenure of the Pastor

The Pastor's tenure shall be defined by the Pastor's call agreement with the congregation. During the tenure of the Pastor, the Pastoral Relations Team shall serve as the primary liaison between the Pastor and the congregation.

Section 5 - Termination of a Pastor

The relationship between the Pastor and the congregation may be terminated upon the Pastor's resignation with ninety days advance notice to the congregation or by a three-fourths majority vote of the active members in attendance at a special meeting called by the Board. In order to bring the Pastor-Congregation relationship to vote, either of the following steps may be taken:

(a) Upon recommendation by the Pastoral Relations Team, the Board may call a special meeting in accordance with Article II, Section 3 for a vote by the active members of the congregation; or

(b) Upon receipt of a petition signed by twenty (20) active church members, the Board shall call a special meeting in accordance with Article II, Section 3 for a vote by the active members of the congregation.

ARTICLE IV Deacons

Section 1 – Mission of the Deacons

The Deacons are the spiritual stewards of the Church and are entrusted with providing care and spiritual guidance to the congregation.

191 (a) The Deacons shall elect a Chairperson to represent the Deacons on the Church
192 Board.

193
194 (b) The Deacons may establish internal rules and procedures to fulfill their duties.

195
196 (c) The Deacons shall review the active membership roster and recommend any
197 appropriate changes to the Church Board.

198
199 Section 2 – Number, Election and Tenure

200
201 There shall be not less than eight active deacons at any given time. Upon election to this
202 position, each deacon is elected for life and shall remain a deacon as long as that person
203 actively performs his/her duties. A deacon may resign or ask to be placed on emeritus status at
204 any time upon written notice to the Chairperson of the Deacons. Should it come to the attention
205 of the deacons that a deacon is unable to perform his/her duties, the deacons shall meet
206 privately in accordance with their internal rules and vote upon the issue of whether or not that
207 deacon should be placed on emeritus status.

208
209 Upon recommendation of the Chairperson of the Deacons, the Board shall accept
210 nominations to select a new deacon. Only active members of the congregation are eligible to
211 serve as Deacons. The Church Board shall announce the nomination(s) for the new deacon(s)
212 subject to vote by the congregation at the next quarterly congregational meeting.

213
214 ARTICLE V
215 The Church Board

216
217 Section 1 – Board Members & Eligibility

218
219 The Board shall be the executive body of the Church. The members of the Board shall
220 be: the Pastor, the chairperson of the Deacons, the Church Moderator, the Clerk, the Financial
221 Secretary, the Treasurer, the chairperson of the Property Team, the chairperson of the
222 Education Team, the chairperson of the Pastoral Relations Team, the chairperson of the
223 Worship Team, the chairperson of the Hospitality and Special Events Team, the Representative
224 of the Women's Missionary Aide and the Youth Representative.

225
226 All members and representatives serving on the Church Board shall be active members
227 of the congregation. All members of the Church Board shall have identical voting rights, no
228 individual serving on the Board shall have more than one vote.

229
230 Section 2 - Organization and Government

231
232 (a) The Board shall meet monthly on specific dates to be announced not less than two
233 weeks in advance by the Church Moderator. The Board shall also meet from time to time upon
234 reasonable request of any member of the Board with reasonable notice to all other members of
235 the Board. All meetings of the Church Board shall be open to the congregation and active
236 participation in discussions is encouraged. Only members of the Church Board are eligible to
237 vote.

(b) The Church Moderator may cancel any scheduled Board meeting. The Board shall meet at least once during every sixty-day period.

(c) Seven members present at any Board meeting shall constitute a quorum.

(d) All acts and deliberations of the Board are subject to the will and revision of the governing body (Article II, Section 2). The Board shall not perform any acts contrary to the constitution.

Section 3 – Authority and Duties of the Church Board

The Church Board shall:

(a) Transact the regular business of the church during the interval between quarterly congregational meetings.

(b) Appoint individuals to fill any vacancies that affect the Board or any Team. Should it come to the attention of the Board that a Team member has not fulfilled that member's duties pursuant to this Article, the Board may schedule a Board meeting with reasonable notice to all Board members and vote upon the issue of removal. In the event that a Team member is removed by the Board, the Board may appoint a successor to serve until the end of the calendar year or until a new Team member is elected, whichever shall first occur.

(c) Approve or disapprove the recommendation of the Pastoral Relations Team with regard to the engagement of an Interim Pastor.

(d) Appoint personnel to audit the financial records of the Church each year.

(e) Appoint special Teams which will help to further the ministry of the church.

(f) Use the adopted budget as the guide for spending in affairs pertaining to repairs, maintenance, upkeep and improvements of the properties of the church, including the parsonage. The Board may adjust line items within the adopted budget and shall report all budget adjustments to the congregation at the next quarterly congregational meeting.

(g) Approve payment for non-budgeted or over-budget items, however, the aggregate of such payments may not exceed one percent of the annual approved church budget in any quarter without congregational approval. All payments pursuant to this paragraph shall be reported to the congregation at the next quarterly congregational meeting.

(h) Authorize the sale and purchase of personal property in accordance with this Section. The Board may not authorize the sale, purchase or mortgage of any real estate without a vote by the congregation.

(i) Review and approve recommendations of the Memorial Team, however, distributions from Memorial Funds may not exceed one percent of the current Memorial Fund balance in any one quarter without congregational approval. All distributions pursuant to this paragraph shall be reported at the next congregational meeting.

(j) Oversee the wider mission of the Church.

(k) Upon recommendation of the Chairperson of the Deacons, the Board shall take appropriate action regarding membership status.

(l) Grant letters of transfer to any member requesting that his/her membership be sent to another Church.

(m) Determine the amount that the church shall reimburse visiting ministers or guest speakers for filling the pulpit in the absence of the Pastor.

(n) Ensure that no special collection for outside projects, materials, or activities not regularly supported by the church, shall be taken without the consent of the Board; nor shall anyone be authorized to solicit money for such outside activities from the membership without the consent of the Board.

(o) Exercise decision-making authority on behalf of the church in times of emergency to protect the property interests of the church.

(p) Enact bylaws consistent with this Constitution in order to provide guidance, assistance and structure for the Pastor, Deacons, Officers, Representatives and Leadership Teams.

ARTICLE VI Officers

Section 1 – Officers & Eligibility

The officers of the church shall be the Church Moderator, the Clerk, the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer, the Assistant Financial Secretary and the Assistant Treasurer. Only active members of the congregation are eligible to serve as officers of the church. All officers bear a fiduciary responsibility to the West Liberty United Church of Christ and the members of the congregation.

Section 2 - How Elected and Tenure

All officers shall be elected at the October quarterly congregational meeting and shall assume their duties on January 1. The Church Moderator shall be elected to a one year term and may be re-elected for up to two additional one-year terms. All other officers shall be elected to one-year terms and may be re-elected to additional annual terms without limitation. In the event that an officer is unable to fulfill the term of office, the Board may appoint a successor to serve until the end of the calendar year or until a new officer is elected, whichever shall first occur. Should it come to the attention of the Board that one of the officers has not fulfilled that officer's duties pursuant this Article, the Board may schedule a Board meeting with reasonable notice to all Board members and vote upon the issue of removal. In the event that an officer is removed by the Board, the Board may appoint a successor to serve until the end of the calendar year or until a new officer is elected, whichever shall first occur.

Section 3 – Church Moderator

The Moderator shall:

(a) Serve as the chief executive officer of the church for business affairs and serve as the public spokesperson for the church.

(b) Enter into appropriate contracts on behalf of the church with the approval of the Board;

(c) Prepare the agenda for all Board meetings, all quarterly congregational meetings and all special meetings and shall conduct all meetings in an orderly fashion.

(d) Serve as a member of the Nominating Team and represent the Nominating Team on the Church Board.

Section 4 – Clerk

The Clerk shall:

Keep current, accurate and organized records of all business transacted by the Church and preserve important data related to the church.

Section 5 - Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall:

(a) Collect, record and deposit all money received by the church.

(b) Provide a record of annual gifts, upon request, in accordance with the church bylaws.

(c) Serve as a member of the Memorial Team and represent the Memorial Team on the Church Board.

The Assistant Financial Secretary shall support the mission and functions of the Financial Secretary and substitute for the Financial Secretary as necessary, including voting rights on the Church Board. The Assistant Financial Secretary shall also serve as a member of the Memorial Team.

Section 6 – Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

The Treasurer shall:

(a) Pay all bills and expenditures that have been included in the church budget or approved by the Board.

(b) Maintain records and conduct business in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

(c) Prepare financial statements for the Board and congregational meetings.

(d) Serve as a member of the Finance Team and represent the Finance Team on the Church Board.

391 The Assistant Treasurer shall support the mission and functions of the Treasurer and
392 substitute for the Treasurer as necessary, including exercising voting rights on the Church
393 Board In the absence of the Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer shall also serve as a member
394 of the Finance Team.

395
396 ARTICLE VII
397 Leadership Teams
398

399 Section 1 - Name and Size
400

401 Personnel for the following Teams shall be elected or appointed, as provided for in the
402 constitution, to assist in the conduct of church activities and functions:
403

404 There shall be eight Leadership Teams: the Property Team (consisting of six members),
405 the Pastoral Relations Team (consisting of three members), the Finance Team (consisting of
406 three general members, plus the Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer), the Education Team
407 (consisting of six members), the Worship Team (consisting of six general members, plus the
408 organist and the choir director), the Hospitality & Special Events Team (consisting of six
409 members), the Memorial Team (consisting of three general members plus the Financial
410 Secretary and the Assistant Financial Secretary) and the Nominating Team (consisting of three
411 general members plus the Church Moderator).
412

413 All teams are authorized to make purchases to support their respective ministries within
414 the budget allocated to that team.
415

416 Section 2 - How Elected, Eligibility and Tenure
417

418 All team members shall be elected at the October quarterly congregational meeting and
419 shall assume their duties on January 1. All general team members shall be elected to three
420 year terms and may be re-elected to additional three year terms without limitation. One
421 incoming general member of the Pastoral Relations, Finance, Memorial and Nominating Teams
422 shall be elected each year, corresponding with the expiration of the term of one outgoing
423 general member of those teams. Two incoming general members of the Property, Education,
424 Worship and Hospitality & Special Events Teams shall be elected each year, corresponding with
425 the expiration of the terms of two outgoing general members of those teams.
426

427 All active members of the congregation are eligible to serve on any leadership team. In
428 addition, any person who regularly attends services at the West Liberty United Church of Christ
429 and shares in the contemporary life and work of the West Liberty United Church of Christ is
430 eligible to serve on a leadership team. Only active members of the congregation may serve as
431 the chairperson of a leadership team.
432

433 In the event that a team member is unable to fulfill the term of service, the Board may
434 appoint a successor to serve until the end of the calendar year or until a new team member is
435 elected, whichever shall first occur.
436

437 Section 3 – Mission of the Property Team
438

439 The mission of the Property Team is to manage, maintain, secure and improve the real
440 estate comprised of the church buildings, parsonage and grounds as well as all attachments,

vehicles, equipment, fixtures, furniture, furnishings and other tangible personal property owned by the church that is attached to or located upon the premises.

The Property Team shall have no authority to borrow money upon, buy, sell, lease, mortgage, transfer or alter any portion of the real estate or any of the tangible property owned by the church without express authority from the Board. The Property Team is authorized to make purchases to support its mission and ministries within the annual budget allocated to the Team and may secure the services of qualified church custodians as necessary and supervise the services provided by the custodians.

The chairperson of the Property Team shall represent the team on the Church Board.

Section 4 – Mission of the Pastoral Relations Team

The mission of the Pastoral Relations Team is to support and maintain an open and healthy relationship between the pastor and the members of the congregation. The Team serves as an advisory group to the pastor and as support for the pastor's leadership. As an advisory group, the team shares ideas, dreams, hopes, expectations and concerns of the congregation with the pastor. As support for the pastor, the team interprets roles, functions and needs of the pastor to the congregation.

Whenever a Pastoral vacancy occurs, the Pastoral Relations Team shall seek a new candidate in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the Church Bylaws and by utilizing all resources available through the Association, the Conference and/or the local offices of the United Church of Christ. Until such time as the vacancy is filled, the Pastoral Relations Team shall seek out a candidate for an interim pastor and recommend a candidate to the Board. Any interim pastor must be supportive of the history, polity and theology of the United Church of Christ.

The chairperson of the Pastoral Relations Team shall represent the Team on the Church Board.

Section 5 – Mission of the Finance Team

It shall be the mission of the Finance Team to create a comprehensive budget of anticipated receipts and expenditures for the fiscal year. The Finance Team shall submit the budget to the Board at the September Board meeting for review and shall submit a board-approved budget to the congregation at the October congregational meeting for final approval. The Finance Team shall review the financial statements provided by the Treasurer on at least a quarterly basis and provide support, assistance and feedback to the Treasurer.

The Treasurer shall represent the Finance Team on the Church Board.

Section 6 – Mission of the Education Team

The mission of the Education Team is to oversee all educational ministries of the church, including Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Bible study groups and youth group activities.

The chairperson of the Education Team shall represent the Team on the Church Board.

492 Section 7 – Mission of the Worship Team

493
494 It shall be the mission of the Worship Team to oversee all dimensions of congregational
495 worship services. In the event that the Pastor is ill, on vacation or otherwise requires a
496 substitute for a worship service, the Worship Team shall make arrangements for a substitute
497 with the advice and input from the Pastor.

498
499 The Chairperson of the Worship Team shall represent the Team on the Church Board.

500
501 Section 8 – Mission of the Hospitality & Special Events Team

502
503 It shall be the mission of the Hospitality & Special Events Team to plan and facilitate
504 special fellowship events of the Church and to assist other church Teams, as well as the
505 Missionary Aide Society, by providing food service and hospitality.

506
507 The Chairperson of the Hospitality & Special Events Team shall represent the Team on
508 the Church Board.

509
510 Section 9 – Mission of the Memorial Team

511
512 It shall be the mission of the Memorial Team to manage memorial funds. The Memorial
513 Team shall oversee the distribution of memorial funds in accordance with: (a) the instructions
514 set forth in the devise or bequest, (b) the wishes and desires of the family of the decedent
515 and/or (c) the specific request of the benefactor.

516
517 The Financial Secretary shall represent the Memorial Team on the Church Board.

518
519 Section 10 – Mission of the Nominating Team

520
521 It shall be the mission of the Nominating Team to present a slate of proposed officers
522 and Team members for presentation at the October Congregational Meeting subject to a vote of
523 the congregation.

524
525 The Church Moderator shall represent the Nominating Team on the Church Board.

526
527 ARTICLE VIII

528 Missionary Aide Society

529
530 The Missionary Aide Society is an auxiliary organization of the church. The function of
531 the society is to develop programs that foster interest in and concern for the wider mission of the
532 church and the United Church of Christ.

533
534 The Missionary Aide Society shall be represented on the Church Board by a member of
535 the organization selected annually in accordance with the Society's internal rules. The selected
536 Representative must be an active member of the congregation.

537
538 ARTICLE IX

539 Youth Representative

540
541 The youth of the church shall be represented on the Church Board. The Youth
542 Representative serves as an advocate for the youth of the church in relation to all missions,

543 programs and ministries. The Youth Representative shall be nominated by the Nominating
544 Team and elected by the congregation on an annual basis. The Youth Representative shall be
545 an active member of the congregation.

546 547 ARTICLE X 548 Amendments

549 550 Section 1 – Procedure for Amending the Constitution

551
552 This Constitution may be amended by vote of not less than two-thirds of the members of
553 the congregation present at a Special Meeting scheduled by the Church Board for the express
554 purpose of considering a Constitutional Amendment. The quorum for a Special Meeting called
555 to consider a Constitutional Amendment shall be twenty (20) members of the congregation.

556 557 Section 2 – Form of Proposed Amendments

558
559 The purpose of amending the Church Constitution is to make appropriate changes to the
560 Constitution without setting aside the basic Constitution in order to replace it with a new
561 Constitution. In order to reflect that objective, proposed Amendments may take the form of:

562
563 (a) editing and/or modifying the existing text of an Article or Articles, the Mission
564 Statement or the Statement of Faith; and/or

565
566 (b) adding new Articles or Sections; and/or

567
568 (c) deleting existing Articles or Sections.

569 570 Section 3 – Calling a Meeting to Consider a Proposed Amendment

571
572 The Board shall schedule a Special Meeting in order to consider a proposed
573 Constitutional Amendment upon:

574
575 (a) Two-thirds vote by the members of the Church Board with a quorum present.

576
577 (b) Receipt by the Church Board of a written petition setting forth a proposed
578 amendment that has been signed by not less than twenty (20) members of the
579 congregation.

580 581 Section 4 – Notice of a Meeting to consider a proposed Constitutional Amendment

582
583 The Church Board shall provide notice of a Special Meeting to consider a proposed
584 Constitutional Amendment in the same manner that the Church Board is required to provide for
585 any Special Meeting of the congregation. In addition, notice shall be published in the church
586 newsletter.

587
588 The full text of the proposed amendment shall be made available to the congregation not
589 less than two weeks prior to the Special Meeting and shall be posted on the primary church
590 bulletin board and disseminated by all available electronic media.